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# General Assembly

Fifty-second Session

*Official Records*

**79**th plenary meeting
Monday, 22 December 1997, 4 p.m.
New York

*President*: Mr. Udovenko . . . . . (Ukraine)

*The meeting was called to order at 7.25 p.m.*

**Agenda item 12** (*continued*)

**Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/52/3)**

**The President:** Members will recall that chapters I to IV, sections A, B, D and H of chapter V, and chapters VI and VII of the report of the Economic and Social Council were assigned for consideration directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of chapters I to IV, sections A, B, D and H of chapter V, and chapters VI and VII of the report of the Economic and Social Council?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of those chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council which were assigned for consideration directly in plenary meeting?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 12.

**Reports of the Fifth Committee**

**The President:** The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 12, 113 to 115, 119 to 121, 135, 137, 153, 160 and 116.

I request the rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Djamel Moktefi of Algeria, to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

**Mr. Moktefi** (Algeria), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have the honour to introduce today to the General Assembly the reports of the Fifth Committee on the agenda items allocated to it. Thirty-seven items were allocated to the Fifth Committee at the Assembly's fifty-second session. From September to December the Committee held 46 plenary meetings, in addition to informal consultations. I shall give a brief report of the results of its work.

With regard to agenda item 12, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/729. In paragraph 4 of the report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision by which the General Assembly would take note of chapters I, V (section B) and VII of the report of the Economic and Social Council contained in document A/52/3/Rev.1. The Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote.

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

With regard to agenda item 113, entitled "Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/732. In paragraph 6 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 114, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/746. In paragraph 7 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of two draft decisions, which were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 115, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/743. In paragraph 6 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 119, entitled "Pattern of conferences", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/734. In paragraph 7 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 120, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/745. In paragraph 6 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 121, entitled "United Nations common system", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/735. In paragraph 7 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 135, entitled "Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/724. In paragraph 6 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 137, entitled "Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/726. In paragraph 6 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 153, entitled "Human resources management", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/739. In paragraph 6 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 160, entitled "Admission of the International Seabed Authority to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/718. In paragraph 5 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption a draft decision by which the General Assembly would decide to admit the International Seabed Authority to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. The draft decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 116, entitled "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", the report of the Fifth Committee will be issued as document A/52/744. Under this item the Committee adopted five draft resolutions, which for the time being are contained in A/C.5/52/L.18, relating to issues concerning the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, and A/C.5/52/L.19, which has two parts and contains the programme budget for the biennium. The Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the draft resolutions, as orally revised at its 46th meeting, which was held today. The draft resolutions were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

**The President:** If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General

Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee which are before the Assembly.

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

**Agenda item 12** (*continued*)

**Report of the Economic and Social Council**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/729)**

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 4 of its report.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

*The draft decision was adopted.*

**The President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of those chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council which were allocated to the Fifth Committee?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We have thus concluded our consideration of all the chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 12?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 113**

**Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/732)**

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

*The draft resolution was adopted* (resolution 52/212).

**The President:** We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 113.

**Agenda item 114**

**Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/746)**

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision I, entitled "Action taken on certain items", without a vote.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

*Draft decision I was adopted.*

**The President:** The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II, entitled "Biennial programme of work of the Fifth Committee for 1998-1999", without a vote.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

*Draft decision II was adopted.*

**The President:** We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 114.

**Agenda item 115**

**Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/743)**

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft resolution consists of two parts. Part A is entitled "Final budget appropriations for the biennium 1996-1997". Part B is entitled "Final income estimates for the biennium 1996-1997".

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to do likewise?

*The draft resolution was adopted* (resolution 52/213 A and B).

**The President:** We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 115.

**Agenda item 119**

**Pattern of conferences**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/734)**

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

*The draft resolution was adopted* (resolution 52/214).

**The President:** We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 119.

**Agenda item 120** (*continued*)

**Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/745)**

**The President:** I call on the Chairman of the Fifth Committee.

**Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) (Chairman of the Fifth Committee): In my capacity as Chairman of the Fifth Committee, I should like to bring to your attention, Sir, and to the attention of the General Assembly a technical correction in the document which we are now considering: A/C.5/52/L.17.

In the second line of the second preambular paragraph of that document, after the phrase "Member States", the word "broadly" should be added. This was adopted in the Committee but has somehow been missed in the processing of the document.

**The President:** I now call on the representative of Liechtenstein for an explanation of vote before the voting.

**Mrs. Fritsche** (Liechtenstein): I wish to state for the record our position on the draft resolution on the scale of assessments which we are in the process of adopting.

First of all, we would like to say that we are gratified to note that it has been possible to elaborate a new scale of assessments which commands consensus among the membership and to express our sincere hope that this important step will contribute to putting the Organization on a more sound financial basis, as indeed is urgently needed.

Liechtenstein has expressed its position on the scale of assessments on several occasions, in writing, formally and informally. It was our wish to remain at the assessed contribution of 0.01 per cent, which is identical with the

floor rate that has been abolished under the new scale of assessments. While we recognize that the abolishment of the floor rate was a necessary step, we hold the view that the set percentage reflects our capacity to pay and is thus in accordance with the crucial criterion relevant for the elaboration of the scale of assessments.

It has never been our intention to act in any way unilaterally, as we think no other country should do. I should therefore like to inform the Assembly that we are going to join the consensus on the new scale of assessments with the following understanding.

We maintain our position that we should have been assessed at 0.01 per cent. Since the scale for the period 1998-2000 assesses Liechstentein at 0.005 and 0.006 per cent, respectively, we envisage paying the difference between our assessed contribution and the 0.01 per cent assessment by way of voluntary contributions to activities which we will announce at a later stage.

If the scale of assessments is reopened in the upcoming years in accordance with section D of the draft resolution before us, we will take that opportunity to come back to our concern, and we hope that it will then be possible to find a solution accommodating our interests that is based on broad consultation and consensus among the membership.

All this is done in a spirit of compromise and with the clear understanding that the matter raised by us will remain on the table for further discussion. We would like to thank all the delegations which have expressed their understanding and that have assisted us in pursuing our concerns. We hope that our way of proceeding is in accordance with the overall interests of our Organization, which is our common goal in the Assembly.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands on a point of order.

**Mr. Menkveld** (Netherlands): As the Chairman of the Fifth Committee has already pointed out one technical error in document A/C.5/52/L.17, my delegation would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to another technical error. In the table with the Member States, with their percentages for the years 1998-2000, the Netherlands is not mentioned in that list, and my delegation would wish that technical error to be corrected.

**The President:** This is a very important point of order, and certainly this technical error will be corrected. It is very important that this error be corrected because of the contribution of the Netherlands to the regular budget.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report, as orally revised by the representative of Bangladesh, the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, and by the representative of the Netherlands, which for the time being is contained in document A/C.5/52/L.17.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

*The draft resolution was adopted* (resolution 52/215 A, B, C and D).

**The President:** I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their position on the resolution just adopted.

**Mr. Richardson** (United States of America): We wish to offer our highest compliments and thanks to Chairman Chowdhury and to the scales coordinator, Mr. Maycock, for their outstanding leadership of the Fifth Committee through a long and arduous session. We would not have reached the positions we all have agreed to support today without their leadership, inspiration and innovation.

The United States joins in consensus in support of the scales resolution offered here today. Like other Members, we find that there are concepts and elements that are not exactly to our liking, but this process is not designed to satisfy everyone's every wish and need. With respect to the scale, we will not burden this plenary by repeating our specific positions on the various elements of the methodology. Our positions are well known. They have been repeated in formal, informal, "informal informal", and still more informal settings these past weeks, and will be repeated when we debate this issue again.

We do wish to comment on paragraph D, which relates to a review of the scale for the last two years of this period. Again, we wish to thank coordinator Maycock for his work, which led us to language we can agree on. He and other key senior members of the Fifth Committee were essential in bridging the divisions on this issue and in so doing enabling movement towards a

brighter financial future for the United Nations. Rather than offer a legalistic interpretation of our understanding of this resolution, let me simply describe it as an open door to permit a revisiting of the scale for the years 1999-2000. We said during the consultations that we wished to see an open door, not a swinging door nor a revolving door, and certainly not just the painted outline of a door on a wall. This resolution contains that open door, and we will be working assiduously over the next weeks and months to bring about a set of circumstances that make sure our entrance through that door receives a welcome from the Members of the United Nations.

The United States Government's commitment to working with the other Members to restore the financial health of the United Nations is unequivocal. Again, we wish to thank you, Sir, for your leadership of this reform Assembly, Chairman Chowdhury, coordinator Maycock and all those delegations that worked together to produce this resolution, which we join in supporting.

**Mr. Wolzfeld** (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have once again the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as Norway, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the adoption by consensus of a new scale of assessments of the United Nations Organization for the years 1998-2000. However, we must recognize that the decision we have just made does not resolve our Organization's severe financial crisis. The proposals of the European Union which aim at providing the Organization with reliable and predictable resources are more than ever necessary. We wish to point out, furthermore, that it is thanks to the Member States that continue to fulfil their financial responsibilities — and these include the 15 members of the European Union — that the United Nations Organization is still in a position today to carry out its activities.

The negotiating process on this resolution proved to be particularly difficult this year, and we welcome the responsible and constructive role played by a number of delegations during the debates in the Fifth Committee.

However, while acknowledging the right of each delegation to defend the interests of its own Government, we regret that on a number of occasions the eager pursuit of specific goals won out over the obligation to take into account the common interest of the Organization.

The resolution we have just adopted provides, in its section D, for discussions on a possible review of the scale of assessments under certain circumstances.

In this context, the European Union wishes to state that it will agree to a reopening of the discussions on the scale of assessments only after the United States of America has adopted legislative provisions enabling it to clear its arrears in full and to respect its financial obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. The entry into force of any possible revised scale of assessments cannot take place before monies owed have actually been paid.

The European Union trusts that all Member States will fulfil their obligations to the Organization on time, in full, without conditions and in accordance with the scale of assessments adopted by the General Assembly. No unilateral reduction of the amount owed to the Organization by the United States of America can be accepted.

Furthermore, it is important for the Committee on Contributions to play its role in the possible reopening of the discussion on the scale of assessments, since each point will have to be thoroughly examined. The European Union explained its position regarding this matter when the draft resolution was adopted in the Fifth Committee.

Finally, we wish to recall that the scale of assessments for the regular budget is only one element of the proposal made by the European Union to ensure a sound and predictable financial basis for the United Nations. In any case, we are determined to revisit in due course other important elements of the European Union's proposals, including measures aimed at accelerating the payment of arrears, at stricter enforcement of the system of payment of contributions through incentives and disincentives and at reforming the scale for the peacekeeping budget.

**The President**: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 120.

**Agenda item 121**

**United Nations common system**

**Report of the Fifth Com nittee (A/52/735)**

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report contained in document A/52/735.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "United Nations common system: report of the International Civil Service Commission".

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

*The draft resolution was adopted* (resolution 52/216).

**The President:** We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 121.

**Agenda item 135**

**Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/724)**

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/52/724.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

*The draft resolution was adopted* (resolution 52/217).

**The President:** The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 135.

**Agenda item 137**

**Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/726)**

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/52/726.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

*The draft resolution was adopted* (resolution 52/218).

**The President**: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 137.

**Agenda item 153**

**Human resources management**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/739)**

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/52/739.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

*The draft resolution was adopted* (resolution 52/219).

**The President:** We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 153.

**Agenda item 160**

**Admission of the International Seabed Authority to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (A/52/718)**

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of its report contained in document A/52/718.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

*The draft decision was adopted.*

**The President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 160?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 116**

**Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/744)**

**The President:** I call on the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of position.

**Mr. Mwakawago** (United Republic of Tanzania): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China under agenda item 116, on the adoption of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

The draft resolution which we are about to adopt concludes a cycle of intense negotiations carried out under very special circumstances.

As the Assembly is aware, during the current biennium the Organization has had to meet the target savings on the one hand and, on the other, to deal with the process of reform proposed by the Secretary-General.

In meeting the savings targets, the Organization was confronted with the need to significantly reduce expenditures, especially on posts, which impaired the capacity of the Organization to fully implement all mandated programmes and activities.

These negative impacts have been identified in the reports of the Secretary-General, as well as in the reports of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

The Group of 77 and China trust that the budget for the biennium 1998-1999, which we are about to approve, will be able to rectify the shortfalls and difficulties experienced by the Organization during the current biennium in its delivery of programmes and activities, as expected by Member States.

The reform proposals of the Secretary-General, which were welcomed by the Group of 77 and China — comprising 132 countries — brought an additional dimension to the deliberations on the budget for 1998-1999. While the proposed programme budget for 1998-1999 was under consideration in the Fifth Committee, the reform proposals were being examined by the whole General Assembly. This complex process and its budgetary ramifications brought additional challenges for the Fifth Committee in the budget debate, which itself is already a very demanding task that the Committee faces every two years.

The overall level of resources contained in the draft resolutions before us was determined after thorough scrutiny of the requirements of the Organization for the biennium 1998-1999. The Group of 77 and China agreed to a level of resources of $2,532,331,200 on the understanding that this would allow the United Nations to implement in full all its mandated programmes and activities. This has always been the major determinant of the Group's position regarding the overall level of resources.

The Group of 77 and China have agreed to the budget presented on a net basis on the understanding that changes have been introduced only in its presentation and that they do not infringe on established budget rules and procedures. The entities whose budgets are covered by this new-format presentation will be assured by the Secretary-General of allotment of all funds approved in their gross budgets in order to allow them to implement all of their mandated programmes and activities. Moreover, the staffing tables of the entities involved — namely the Joint Inspection Unit, the International Civil Service Commission and the Vienna Conference and Security Services — are now contained in annex I of draft resolution I. We expect that, in accordance with the present draft resolution, all aspects of net budgeting,

including its impact on the functioning of the entities concerned, will be kept under review and that the Secretary-General will report on this subject at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

The Group of 77 and China joined consensus on the Secretary-General's proposal for the abolition of a significant number of posts, on the understanding that such abolition will not adversely affect the capacity of the Organization to fully implement mandated programmes and activities. We wish to emphasize, as draft resolution I states, that the abolition of posts must not entail any involuntary separation of staff. The Group of 77 and China would like to underscore the need to fill promptly the newly approved posts, and trusts that the vacancy rate will be maintained as determined by Member States.

The Group of 77 and China remain attached to the current budgetary process, which should be fully respected. In this connection, the Group stresses that any changes in this process must be subject to the prior consideration and approval of the General Assembly. I would like to underscore that it is the exclusive prerogative of the General Assembly to determine and decide on the budgetary process.

Having gone through a very gruelling marathon, which led to the consensus texts that will shortly be adopted, the Group of 77 and China — which comprises 132 countries — hope that Member States will make sure that financial resources are remitted to the Organization. Failing that, the whole exercise will have been futile.

I wish you, Mr. President, and the representatives of all Member States, happy holidays and a prosperous new year.

**The President:** The General Assembly will now take a decision on the five draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report, and which for the time being are contained in document A/C.5/52/L.18 and in paragraph 28 of document A/C.5/52/L.19 (Part II).

Draft resolution I, entitled "Questions related to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", is contained, for the time being, in document A/C.5/52/L.18. The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

*Draft resolution I was adopted* (resolution 52/220).

**The President:** We turn now to draft resolutions II to V, which for the time being are contained in paragraph 28 of document A/C.5/52/L.19 (Part II).

Draft resolution II (A to C), entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", was adopted by the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

*Draft resolution II (A to C) was adopted* (resolution 52/221 (A to C)).

**The President:** Draft resolution III, entitled "Special subjects relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", was adopted by the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the Assembly wishes also to adopt this draft resolution?

*Draft resolution III was adopted* (resolution 52/222).

**The President:** Draft resolution IV, entitled "Unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 1998-1999", was adopted by the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

*Draft resolution IV was adopted* (resolution 52/223).

**The President:** Draft resolution V, entitled "Working Capital Fund for the biennium 1998-1999", was adopted by the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

*Draft resolution V was adopted* (resolution 52/224).

**The President:** I call now on delegations wishing to explain their positions on the draft resolutions just adopted.

**Mr. Maddens** (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): The European Union would like first of all to thank the coordinator for this item in the Fifth Committee, Mr. Carlos Dante Riva of Argentina, and the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, Ambassador Chowdhury of Bangladesh, for their efforts to produce consensus texts for draft resolutions on the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

The European Union welcomes the decision to undertake during the resumed fifty-second session a review of the working methods of the Fifth Committee. We believe that we should try in future to avoid meetings

of the kind we have endured over the past few days. We believe that approval of the budget could be made faster and more effective.

Here, a possibility for the future could be to study new budgeting techniques, such as results-based budgeting. We support the Secretary-General's pilot projects aimed at devising and introducing new management methods. We are ready to engage in constructive discussions based on the reports that the Secretary-General will be submitting on this subject.

With respect to the question of human rights, we are surprised that some delegations have chosen to use that particularly sensitive and important subject at this sensitive time to attack a practice that has been in existence for a decade. The European Union will never accept the use of a possible administrative omission on the part of the Secretariat as a pretext for eliminating budgetary allocations for human rights.

The process of United Nations reform was an additional factor with which the Fifth Committee had to contend during the fifty-second session — in addition to the simultaneous drawing up of a new scale of assessments and a new programme budget. We believe that the resolution adopted today faithfully reflects — within the limits imposed by the need to achieve consensus — the Secretary-General's proposals and the views voiced by Member States.

In the humanitarian field, we welcome the fact that more attention will be devoted to basic functions, in accordance with resolution 46/182, with regard to drawing up coordination policies and functions for coordination; the promotion of humanitarian issues in consultation with political bodies, including the Security Council; and the coordination of emergency assistance. We should like to express our firm support for the strengthening of the process of consolidated appeals as a means for mobilizing resources by including appeals for rehabilitation and reconstruction and for operations to promote human rights in the field. We agree with the Secretary-General when he notes that humanitarian actions must always be aimed at sustainable solutions.

Before concluding, I should like to say that the Fifth Committee would never have achieved these results without the assistance of the Secretariat, in particular the Budget Director, Mr. Warren Sach.

**Mr. Deineko** (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The draft resolution of the Fifth Committee on the budget, which has just been adopted by consensus, was the result of enormous efforts by the Chairman of the Fifth Committee and by the coordinator for this agenda item. This resolution on the United Nations programme budget provides a clear guideline for the activities of the Organization in the forthcoming biennium. The adoption of the resolution by consensus by all Member States not only attests to the unconditional support by United Nations Member States for the parameters and size of the budget approved for 1998-1999, but enables the Secretary-General to implement all of the United Nations mandates and programmes within the budget in accordance with the funds allocated for each sphere of activity.

A significant part of the work on the budget was devoted to the reform proposals of the Secretary-General. Here, our delegation would like to draw the attention of members of the General Assembly to paragraph 2 of resolution 52/12, which calls upon the Secretary-General to take full account of the views and comments of Member States in implementing the reform measures contained in his report in document A/51/950. The letter dated 14 November 1997 from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Secretary-General, document A/52/664, contains a clear reference to the statement made by the delegation of the Russian Federation during the open-ended informal consultations of the plenary on United Nations reform, which was subsequently conveyed to the Secretary-General in written form.

In that statement, which has since been reaffirmed on numerous occasions, including during meetings of the Fifth Committee, the Russian delegation clearly noted that, while agreeing with the establishment in New York of a Department of Disarmament Affairs, it considers it advisable to appoint as its head someone at the level of United Nations Assistant Secretary-General. We believe that the establishment of a new disarmament structure within the United Nations Secretariat should not be carried out to the detriment of the effective functioning of the Geneva disarmament mechanism. The position of the Russian Federation was supported by many delegations during the open-ended informal consultations of the plenary on United Nations reform.

Furthermore, in this context we are greatly alarmed by the trend, noted by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, towards

increasing the number of high-level posts during the reform process of the Secretariat. It seems that the pyramidal structure of the hierarchy of posts is once again being upset.

Appointing the head of the new Department of Disarmament Affairs at the level of Assistant Secretary-General is also supported by the staffing table that has been approved for that Department, which provides for only 41 people, including General Service staff members. Furthermore, it is significant that in the second tier in the chain of command in the new Department there is only one staff member at the D-2 level. In that context, while we associate ourselves with the consensus on the budget resolution, we should like once again to express our understanding that, in appointing the head of the Department of Disarmament Affairs, the Secretary-General will take into account the well-founded position that has been expressed on numerous occasions by many delegations.

**Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda): Let me begin by associating my delegation with the statement so eloquently made by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury of Bangladesh, and his Bureau, for a job well done. I also wish to thank all the coordinators of the informal consultations on the various agenda items that were before the Fifth Committee for the commendable efforts they made, which enabled the Committee to reach its decisions. We also wish to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Carlos Riva of Argentina for his able leadership in chairing all the informal consultations on this agenda item. We admire his patience and coolness, which he demonstrated during the course of all the meetings that we shared.

Once again, the Fifth Committee, after working tirelessly, has demonstrated its responsibility and usual spirit by adopting by consensus the budget for the biennium 1998-1999. This was made possible through the great understanding and flexibility demonstrated by all delegates. While our delegation attaches great importance to the principle of decision by consensus, particularly on an important subject such as the budget, we wish to underscore that genuine negotiations require Member States to state their views and positions frankly and freely. Negotiations also require the spirit of give and take on the basis of sovereignty and equality. In this regard, our delegation is rather disappointed that the negotiations on the budget we have just adopted fell short on those principles. It was, however, within the spirit of the decision by consensus that our delegation made far-reaching concessions in order not to block consensus.

The Assembly has just witnessed the adoption of a budget that the Secretary-General can call "my budget". Three days ago the General Assembly also adopted the Secretary-General's reform measures and proposals. With the adoption of his own budget and his own reform measures and proposals, we believe that the moment of action has arrived. Our delegation will be looking forward to action rather than to more talk of reform. We are waiting for results and value for money.

We regret that the overall level of resources adopted for the biennium 1998-1999 is very much lower than that for the biennium 1996-1997. This can be interpreted in many ways: the United Nations has become efficient; past figures were plastic; the priority of the Organization has changed; or the activities and the purpose for which the Organization was created have been minimized or eliminated. We do not want to pass judgement. However, one can only note that world inflation is higher today than it was in 1996.

The budgets of similar institutions of government have never seen such a reduction as is the case with the United Nations budget. On the contrary, their budgets have been going up each year.

The Committee, in considering the Secretary-General's proposals, showed great flexibility by agreeing to most, if not all, of them. In fact, the expression "these are the Secretary-General's proposals" was often echoed by many delegations. The Committee went further to ensure that it accommodated those Member States that could not accept the overall level of appropriations of the budget going beyond its desirable range.

Now that Member States have shown their goodwill, it is also our hope that the Secretary-General, in implementing the approved programmes and actions in the biennium 1998-1999, will adhere strictly to the mandates adopted by the General Assembly. It is our considered view that, when we consider the performance report of the budget, we shall be able to give the Secretary-General a clean certificate for implementing all mandated programmes and activities, in particular priority programmes and activities, as approved in General Assembly resolution 51/219 on the medium-term plan.

In this context, we wish to stress the need for the Secretary-General to give a balanced treatment to all approved priorities in terms of resource allocation and implementation. In the same vein, priority programmes and activities, as identified in the medium-term plan, should have a first claim on resources that may be realized through efficiency gains and savings. It is also our hope that the Secretary-General will always seek the approval of the General Assembly, as stated by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, prior to implementing proposals which have an adverse impact on mandated programmes and activities.

Furthermore, it is our hope that all Member States, without exception, will demonstrate their commitment to the Organization by providing the Secretary-General with the necessary resources to enable him to implement the mandates given to him. In one of our informals, we were told that there is a cheque lying across the street, waiting to cross the road. We do hope that, with the budget that we have just adopted, the cheque will cross the road.

In our discussion of the budget, we expressed our concern on a number of issues, such as duplication of work; misplacement of programmes and activities; the top-heaviness of the Organization's inverted-pyramid structure; using advance recosting to reduce the level of budget appropriations; high vacancy rates; and growth in specific programmes. Although we were not persuaded by the arguments advanced by the Secretariat on most of these issues, in the larger interest of the Organization and to give the Secretary-General a chance, we decided to close our technical eyes.

We also noted with keen interest the concept the Secretary-General has introduced in the presentation of his budget. In this connection, we wish to reaffirm the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213, which was extensively negotiated and accepted by consensus as the only legal basis for the preparation of the United Nations budget. In this vein, our delegation will be looking forward with keen interest to the report of the Secretary-General on the use of some of the new budgetary concepts that were recommended on a trial basis by the General Assembly.

Let me conclude by restating that the Committee has played its role and lived up to its responsibility. The food is now on the table. The entire international community, and particularly the developing countries — from Algeria to Zimbabwe in Africa; from Afghanistan to Viet Nam in Asia; from Antigua and Barbuda to Venezuela in Latin America — are waiting for the distribution of the food. They are wondering whether the 1998-1999 budget will leave them hungrier than did the budget of the 1996-1997 biennium. The clarion call is sounded; the international community is waiting for a response.

**Mr. Yel'chenko** (Ukraine): The delegation of Ukraine shares the view just expressed with regard to the establishment in New York of the post of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs. In this connection, I would like to state my delegation's strong hope that, while creating this post, the Secretary-General will take into account the position of Ukraine, which has been repeatedly stated in the Fifth Committee and during the consideration of the actions proposed in the report of the Secretary-General, "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform", and in particular that such posts should be established at the level of Assistant Secretary-General.

**The President:** We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 116.

I should like to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury of Bangladesh, and to the Coordinator of the informal consultations on agenda item 116 on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, Mr. Carlos Dante Riva of Argentina, for their tireless efforts during the 25-hour marathon session over this weekend that resulted in the adoption by consensus of the proposed programme budget.

I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to all Member States for their spirit of cooperation in enabling us to adopt by consensus the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations. In this connection, I would also like to pay a special tribute to Ambassador McCook, the Coordinator on the scale of assessments, for his great work.

The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all the reports of the Fifth Committee.

**Programme of work**

**The President:** Apart from organizational matters on items that may have to be considered by operation of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and bearing in mind the action already taken by the Assembly at its 31st, 35th, 39th, 42nd, 47th, 49th, 50th, 54th,

57th, 67th, 68th, 70th, 71st, 73rd and 76th to 79th plenary meetings concerning agenda items 10, 11, 16 (b), 17 (g), 17 (j), 20 (b), 24, 36, 37, 39, 43 to 45, 47, 60, 73, 83, 95 (a), 104, 106, 112 (d), 113 to 116, 119 to 121, 123, 133, 135, 137, 138, 142 (a), 153, 157 and 159, I should like to propose that the following agenda items remain for consideration during the fifty-second session of the General Assembly:

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| Item 10 | Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization |
| Item 11 | Report of the Security Council |
| Item 16 (b) | Election of seven members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination |
| Item 17 (g) | Appointment of members and alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee |
| Item 17 (j) | Appointment of a member of the Joint Inspection Unit |
| Item 19 | Admission of new Members to the United Nations |
| Item 20 (b) | Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions |
| Item 21 | Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly |
| Item 24 | Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal |
| Item 36 | Question of Palestine |
| Item 37 | The situation in the Middle East |
| Item 39 | Oceans and the law of the sea |
| Item 43 | The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security |
| Item 44 | The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti |
| Item 45 | The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development |
| Item 47 | The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| Item 57 | The situation in Burundi |
| Item 58 | Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields |
| Item 59 | Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters |
| Item 60 | Strengthening of the United Nations system |
| Item 61 | Question of Cyprus |
| Item 73 | Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session |
| Item 83 | Rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee |
| Item 95 (a) | Financing of development, including net transfer of resources between developing and developed countries |
| Item 104 | International drug control |
| Item 106 | Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women |
| Item 112 (d) | Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action |
| Item 113 | Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors |
| Item 114 | Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations |

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| Item 115 | Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 |
| Item 116 | Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 |
| Item 117 | Improving the financial situation of the United Nations |
| Item 118 | Joint Inspection Unit |
| Item 119 | Pattern of conferences |
| Item 120 | Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations |
| Item 121 | United Nations common system |
| Item 122 | Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East |
| Item 123 | Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission |
| Item 124 | Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991) |
| Item 125 | Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara |
| Item 126 | Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia |
| Item 127 | Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters |
| Item 128 | Financing of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II |
| Item 129 | Financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique |
| Item 130 | Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus |
| Item 131 | Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia |
| Item 132 | Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti |
| Item 133 | Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia |
| Item 134 | Financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda |
| Item 135 | Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 |
| Item 136 | Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan |
| Item 137 | Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 |
| Item 138 | Financing of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| Item 139 | Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium |
| Item 140 | Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force |
| Item 141 | Financing of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti |
| Item 142 | Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations |
| Item 143 | Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services |

Item 153 Human resources management

Item 154 Financing of the Military Observer Group of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala

Item 157 United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Item 159 Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that those agenda items remain for consideration during the fifty-second session of the General Assembly?

*It was so decided.*

**Statement by the President**

**The President**: Before closing this part of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, let me offer a few preliminary observations and assessments of what we have together managed to accomplish since we started our deliberations.

First, I wish to report that during the three months of its work, the General Assembly considered 138 items. In this regard, it is worth noting that all of them were important, and that, in my view, we managed to develop productive discussions. Despite the divergence of the views presented by various delegations and the political sensitivity of some of the issues, an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respect of national positions prevailed in the General Assembly's deliberations. The General Assembly adopted 270 resolutions, about 76 per cent of them by consensus, and 77 decisions on the major issues facing our Organization today. The subjects covered were different, and they reflected the breadth and scope of the responsibilities facing the Organization during this time of its renewal and of new global challenges.

At the same time, I hope that members would agree with me that this part of the session has been, to an extent, a special one. It has been marked by the General Assembly's consideration of the institutional reform of the United Nations system, the outlines of which had been suggested by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. This issue dominated the general debate during the work of the high-level segment of the session. It was also the subject of thorough discussions during deliberations in the plenary and at informal meetings. Those broad discussions demonstrated a notable convergence in the aspirations and intentions of the Member States concerning the need to renovate the Organization so that it is better prepared to face new realities and challenges.

As a result of innovative thinking and the demonstrated political will to reach a desired goal, the General Assembly introduced a new format of deliberations — the open-ended informal consultations of the plenary. This allowed all delegations, large and small, to actively participate in the discussions on this particularly important item. Moreover, it enabled them to contribute equally to the final results of this lengthy but worthy exercise.

It took 16 meetings of the open-ended informal consultations, a number of the so-called informal informals, conducted by the Friends of the President, and a countless number of meetings and consultations held at the Office of the President of the General Assembly before we could conclude our discussion on the report of the Secretary-General on "Renewing the United Nations: measures and proposals". As members know, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions in which it commended the Secretary-General for his efforts and outlined further steps necessary for the implementation of his proposals aimed at strengthening the existing institutional and operational machinery and introducing new mechanisms required for the successful functioning of the United Nations.

In this regard, I should like to thank all the Friends and super-Friends of the President, as well as all delegations, for their active and constructive participation in our deliberations on the report of the Secretary-General. It is important for me to report to the Assembly that, in accordance with the request of the Member States, the views expressed and comments made by delegations in the course of these discussions were sent to the Secretary-General with a request to take full account of them in the process of the reform implementation.

Although many issues are still waiting to be resolved in the process of the United Nations reform, including action on setting up a revolving credit fund, a re-examination of the role of United Nations agencies and the establishment of "sunset provisions", today we have a reason to assert that the process of reform has become a reality. It was endorsed by concrete decisions of the General Assembly, which no doubt have ushered the United Nations into a new stage of its history.

This has happened because of the true spirit of consensus which emerged in the course of our deliberations on this issue and which will be invaluable in our further efforts to develop and complete this process of reform. By engaging in it, we are striving to make the United Nations more effective so that it can better contribute to the people of our global village in their efforts to build a safer, healthier, more just and prosperous world.

The issue of Security Council reform also attracted considerable attention from the Member States. It was raised in the course of the general debate by almost 160 heads of delegations, which is a clear indication of the membership's strong interest in the issue.

The comprehensive exchange of views on this subject during our discussions in the plenary was remarkably explicit and straightforward, and although it demonstrated that all Members share the same belief in the need for changes in the composition of the Security Council and the methods of its work, it also proved once again that there was no clear consensus on how to arrange these changes.

The General Assembly agreed not to take a decision on this matter at this stage. However, it will continue its work on this issue starting in the second half of January next year, in the format of the relevant Open-ended Working Group.

Referring back to my inaugural statement, I should like to reiterate the two principles which, in my opinion, should govern our approach to any issue relating to the reform of the United Nations, including that of the Security Council: these are realism and responsibility. We have to be very realistic and responsible about proposals concerning the future of this main body of our Organization.

I hope that the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council will be successful in finding out whether the so-called magic formula of enlargement of the Security Council exists in reality, and I hope that we will be able to approach the end of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly with a clearer vision of the future Security Council.

The process of United Nations reform, as all of us are aware, has been taking place against the background of a precarious financial situation in the Organization. The seriousness of the financial situation in our Organization warranted the holding, at the request of the Secretary-General, of a meeting of the relevant Open-ended High-Level Working Group. This matter will continue to be the object of careful study in the Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations in the coming months.

During the past months of this session of the General Assembly, we have witnessed a number of important achievements in the field of international security and disarmament. The General Assembly held an important exchange of views in the First Committee on the issue of anti-personnel landmines, which also received the greatest scrutiny from international public opinion. It took place against the backdrop of the successful conclusion of the Ottawa process, and the General Assembly marked this historic event by adopting a resolution on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

I cannot but mention another contribution made by the General Assembly to the process of disarmament. After this session, according to the resolution adopted by the Assembly, the world will have one more nuclear-weapon-free zone — now it will be Central Asia. The proposal for the establishment of Central Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone received support from all Member States, and a resolution on this issue was adopted without a vote.

Another source of satisfaction resulting from the work of the session is the adoption by the General Assembly of the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings. This became possible as a result of a compromise reached among Member States. It will certainly fill in the lacuna existing in international law on terrorism and will be an important step forward in combating this evil.

As a result of our common efforts, we have also come closer than ever before to the establishment of an international criminal court. Today there is no doubt about the importance and the necessity of creating such a body and, at this session, the draft statute for the court has acquired its concrete contours.

The General Assembly also accomplished a great deal in furthering cooperation in the areas of sustainable development and international economic cooperation, as well as on a number of other important issues. Today development has become a priority matter for the Organization, and it is rightly perceived to be inseparable

from such important issues as, for example, the maintenance of international peace and security. This understanding helped delegations iron out their differences regarding certain aspects of development, in particular with regard to the concept of sustainable development, and it is to the benefit of all of us and the Organization that a consensus emerged.

Of particular note is the resolution adopted by the General Assembly which establishes a process for the convening before the end of the year 2001 of a high-level international forum on financing for development. I would like also to attach particular significance to the decision on the renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership.

The General Assembly also dwelt extensively on other items, including the promotion of human rights, as well as issues related to narcotic drugs. On the latter subject, the General Assembly made specific proposals for the preparatory work for the special session of the Assembly, which is to take place from 8 to 10 June next year. In its resolution on the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, the General Assembly decided to convene a world conference on racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance not later than the year 2001.

We also dealt with the issue of reviewing and adopting the new scale of assessments. The elaboration of the scale was proposed and justified by many delegations on the grounds that any budget, if we wish it to be sound, should be based on proper taxation.

Given the financial constraints of the United Nations, as well as its difficult and overloaded agenda, deliberations on this issue proved to be quite complex. Most of them were conducted in the Fifth Committee, and at the end of this part of the General Assembly's session we have managed to adopt a new scale of assessments.

I have highlighted this achievement of the fifty-second session deliberately because it leads the Organization away from the brink of bankruptcy and opens up the possibility for the United Nations to enjoy financial stability in the future.

During this session, we also agreed on the programme budget for the next biennium, which also reflects the measures and proposals of the Secretary-General concerning the programme of United Nations reform.

It should be especially noted that only once every six years does the discussion of the scale of assessments coincide with the discussion of the budget. This circumstance added some difficulties to the work of the General Assembly on these issues, but, judging by the final results, we may say that this exercise was also a success.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we managed to reach a broad agreement on most of the issues, as well as on the strategies for addressing them. We also managed to succeed in resolving many controversial issues without losing the spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding.

Much has been improved in our work during these past three months. We can in particular highlight the enhanced transparency in the work of the main organs of the Organization. The General Assembly, on its part, has taken certain steps to rationalize and streamline its agenda. Significant improvements have also been made in the overall organization of the Assembly's work. As an indicator of this trend, most of the Committees finished their work well before the scheduled time.

Before suspending the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, let me extend to all delegations my sincere appreciation for their assistance, for their very instrumental cooperation and for their active work during these months.

I should also like to express my special thanks to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the people in the Secretariat, whose close cooperation I have enjoyed throughout the whole three-month period of our work.

My words of gratitude go also to all Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and all Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteurs of the Main Committees for their excellent contribution to our common achievements.

Bearing in mind that we are about to enter the holiday season, I wish all happy holidays and a happy new year.

*The meeting rose at 8.55 p.m.*